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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 BAGHDAD 001950

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SUBJECT: READ OUT FROM JUNE 10 MCNS

REF: BAGHDAD 1887

Classified By: Ambassador Ryan C. Crocker for reasons 1.4 (b) and (d).

11. (C/MNF-I) SUMMARY: Prime Minister Maliki presided over the June 10 meeting of the Ministerial Committee for National Security, during which:

-- Minister of Defense Abdul Qadir summarized his proposal to address the shortage of officers in the Iraqi armed forces. Minister of Interior Jawad Bulani said he had a similar officer development plan for the Ministry of Interior.

-- Abdul Qadir discussed the Iraqi dam security issue (for the fifth consecutive week). General Petraeus said Coalition forces had built a dirt bypass of the destroyed Aski-Mosul bridge (to take pressure off the Mosul dam) and would be building a bridge across the Tigris near the Samarra dam. Maliki stressed the need to rebuild the Safariyah bridge in a timely manner.

--Maliki discussed the ongoing trouble in Basrah. He said that in order to address the grave security situation he would appoint MOD's Major General Khaluf Shwayid Jalil to oversee security and send more troops to Basrah, including an armored battalion, and remove the existing Basrah Emergency Security Council. Qadir recommended that the Maliki set up a joint operation command, as in Diyala, led by Major General Jalil. UK Ambassador Dominic Asquith stressed that the "political chaos" should be addressed in parallel with the security situation.

--Maliki raised his continued concern over coalition support to tribes and other groups to fight with the GOI and the Coalition against al Qaeda. He said that to ensure accountability and allegiance to the state, he had established a federal oversight committee to vet and manage all such volunteers. This committee would work closely with MNF-I.

--Maliki approved the recommend re-structuring of the Ministry of Interior as part of the larger MoI reform process. DPM Zoubaie requested a review of hiring practices to ensure Sunni representation among high level MoI posts.

--Minister of Interior raised the importance of resolving the Mujahedin-e Khalq (MeK) issue in cooperation with the US. He said he was waiting a response from the Deputy Chief of Mission to a letter he recently sent him on the MEK issue. (NOTE: Mission has no record of receiving such a letter and will seek another copy.)

Overcoming the MOD and MOI Officer Deficiency - Take II

¶2. (MNF-I/REL MNF-I) For the second week in a row (ref), Ministers of Defense Qadir and Interior Jawad Bulani described their efforts to address the officer and noncommissioned officers deficiency in both the police and military services. Abdul Qadir said his study concluded the shortfall was approximately 6370. Abdul Qadir said MOD plans to bridge the gap by recruiting college graduates to join the officer rank through an accelerated training program. Abdul Qadir also discussed his plan to welcome back some former regime military personnel and individuals who had graduated from military school during that era. Bulani said he was working on a similar plan for both college and high school graduates.

Dam Security Discussion - Take V

¶3. (C/MNF-I) Dam security was discussed for the fifth consecutive week (ref). This week, Minister of Defense Abdul Qadir limited the discussion to the status of the Mosul dam and the importance of addressing its acute vulnerability to attack. General Petraeus said no traffic was currently allowed to go over the Mosul Dam and that Coalition forces have completed a low-water ford bypass of the Aski-Mosul Bridge to take pressure off traffic wanting to use the Mosul Dam road. Coalition forces will also build a military bridge downstream of the Samarra Dam to alleviate the need for civilian traffic to cross that dam as well. Maliki and Deputy Prime Minister Zubaie also stressed the urgency of rebuilding the Sarafiyah bridge in Baghdad and the Maliki directed that the job not be left to the Ministry of Housing and Construction or it would never get done.

Plan to Bring Security to Basrah- Take II

BAGHDAD 00001950 002 OF 002

¶4. (C/MNF-I) Maliki said he was committed to securing Basrah, the "heart of Iraq." He said that based on a recent study prepared by MOD's Major General Jalil Khaluf Shwayid, he was making some changes. Maliki said he will appoint Jalil to immediately replace the current chief of police and oversee all security in the province. Maliki said he would also send additional Iraqi army forces to the province, including an armored battalion. (COMMENT: In order to create such a force, the Prime Minister has already directed the formation of the 5th Brigade of 10th IA Division and it is being formed by cross-leveling companies from other 10th IA Battalions. No immediate fix is available to otherwise build this force, though the PM and MoD may choose to reposition 10th IA units.)

¶5. (C/MNF-I) Abdul Qadir strongly recommended the Prime Minister establish a joint operation center like the one in Diyala and appoint MG Jalil as the overall commander. When asked to whom Jalil would report, Maliki said, if established, the commander would report through the Iraqi Ground Force Command to the Minister of Defense. Abdul Qadir and Maliki also agreed that they should dismiss the current emergency council. (COMMENT: No one mentioned the need to officially remove the governor from his position since he was voted out by the provincial council a few weeks ago.)

¶6. (C/MNF-I) UK Ambassador Dominic Asquith stressed that Maliki should address the "political chaos" at the same time as he focuses security issues.

Maliki's New Oversight Committee for Volunteer Fighters

¶7. (C/REL MNF-I) Maliki raised his continued uneasiness with the current trend of arming and paying tribes and other groups to fight against al Qaeda without federal oversight. He said, to alleviate this concern, he had just established a national committee to vet and manage this "volunteer" program. Zoubaie said this was an important step and noted

that many former 1920 Revolutionary Brigade members are now interested in joining the state in its fight against Al Qaeda. Abdul Qadir was also supportive of the oversight committee, noting this will guard against accepting enemies of the state. Maliki stressed that this committee will work closely with Coalition forces to which General Petraeus responded positively.

Status of MEK

18. (C/REL MNF-I) Bulani said his committee had completed the study directed by the Prime Minister to resolve the MEK issue. He mentioned his recent meeting with the DCM and said he would continue to work closely with the US Embassy to end the "MEK file." Bulani also said he was waiting for a response from the DCM to a letter he recently sent to him on the subject. (NOTE: Since the MCNS, embassy staff has no record of receiving a letter from Bulani on the MEK. We are requesting that Bulani resubmit the letter.)
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